



U.S. Department of Justice

*United States Attorney
Eastern District of Wisconsin*

517 East Wisconsin Avenue

414 / 297-1700

Milwaukee, WI 53202

TTY 414 / 297-1088

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**NEWS RELEASE: FORMER REPUBLICAN PARTY COUNTY CHAIRMAN CHARGED IN
CONNECTION WITH CAMPAIGN FINANCE FRAUD; BECOMES TENTH
PERSON CHARGED IN WAUKESHA - WALWORTH COUNTY ALLEGATIONS**

The former chairman of the Walworth County Republican Party has been criminally charged in federal court for his role in a campaign finance fraud that funneled money to the 2002 reelection campaign of then-governor Scott McCallum, United States Attorney Steven M. Biskupic announced today.

Christopher R. Kocaja (DOB: 10/21/59) of East Troy, was charged in an Information with one count of aiding and abetting election law violations. On September 27, 2005, the United States Attorney filed documents with the court indicting that Kocaja had agreed to plead guilty to the charge and cooperate in the ongoing investigation. If convicted, Kocaja faces up to one year in prison and a fine of \$100,000.

According to the charge, in February of 2002, Kocaja agreed to illegally use corporate funds from Mann Brothers, Inc. to give a \$5,000 contribution to the McCallum campaign. At the time, Kocaja was employed by Mann Brothers and also served as Walworth County Republican Party Chairman.

The charge alleges that Kocaja's actions aided a larger fraud scheme undertaken by Robert Brownell, Robert Mann and others. To date, nine other people have been charged in connection with the activities. They are:

Robert Brownell (DOB: 1/14/61) of Waukesha; formerly CEO of home builder Bielinski Brothers; charged with conspiracy to commit mail fraud. He has plead not guilty and has an October 24, 2005, trial date.

Robert Mann (DOB: 6/6/69) of Elkhorn; formerly a part owner of construction company Mann Brothers; charged with charged with conspiracy to commit mail fraud. He has plead not guilty and has an October 24, 2005, trial date.

Norm Hanson (DOB: 10/28/42) of Delafield; formerly a principal of engineering firm Welch Hanson & Associates; charged with conspiracy to commit mail fraud. He has plead not guilty and has an October 24, 2005, trial date.

Michael A. Gral (DOB: 3/18/60) of Fox Point; formerly a lawyer at Michael Best & Friedrich; charged with conspiracy to commit mail fraud. He has plead not guilty and has an October 24, 2005, trial date.

Paul D. Ormson (DOB: 5/28/45) of Elkhorn; formerly the mayor of Elkhorn, plead guilty to mail fraud and is awaiting sentencing.

Joseph P. Harvey (DOB: 1/27/63) of Waterford; formerly chief financial officer of Bielinski; charged with aiding and abetting a wire fraud scheme. He has plead not guilty and no trial date has yet been scheduled.

David C. Busch (DOB: 5/15/48) of Waukesha; formerly a consultant with Bielinski Brothers; charged with aiding and abetting a wire fraud scheme. He has plead not guilty and no trial date has yet been scheduled.

Walter E. Utter (DOB: 2/1/46) of Elkhorn ; current CEO of Mann Brothers; he previously plead guilty to a federal election law violation and is awaiting sentencing.

Brian P. Carney (DOB: 10/10/72) of Appleton, formerly an employee of Bielinski Brothers; he previously plead guilty to conspiracy to commit mail fraud and is awaiting sentencing.

Brownell, Mann, Hanson, Gral, Harvey and Busch each face up to 20 years imprisonment. Ormson and Carney face up to 5 years imprisonment and Utter faces up to one year imprisonment.

According to previously filed charges, Mann and Brownell engaged in an embezzlement and kickback scheme involving more that \$4 million. More than \$100,000 of that money was used to create a slush fund for the benefit of Republican political candidates, according to charges. The candidates included McCallum, U.S. Senate candidate Russ Darrow and President George W. Bush. Ormson plead guilty to mail fraud in connection with his role in receiving more than \$10,000 in illegal campaign contributions as part of the scheme. The other defendants are charged in connection with separate aspects of the fraud.

“The fraud infected multiple levels of politics in Walworth County,” Biskupic said. Biskupic credited agents from the FBI and Assistant United States Attorney Matthew L Jacobs for their work on this case, noting that their investigation continues.

The charge against Koceja is limited to his involvement with the \$5,000 contribution. There is no indication that Koceja was involved in other aspects of the alleged fraud.

The public is cautioned that an information is merely the formal method of returning charges against an individual and does not constitute inference of his or her guilt. An individual is presumed innocent until such time, if ever, that the government established his or her guilt beyond a reasonable doubt.

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For more information contact:

United States Attorney Steven M. Biskupic
Assistant United States Attorney Matthew L. Jacobs
Public Affairs Liaison Francia Wendelborn
414-297-1700